

goo-Fields Find road. Carnaby stated that the Masked Owl was feeding on Galahs (*Cacatua roseicapilla*) which are common in the area. When we visited the locality on October 9, 1964, a Boobook Owl (*Ninox novaeseelandiae*) had taken over the hollow which contained two of its eggs.

The observation by Carnaby suggests that the South-West population of the Masked Owl ranges to at least the mulga-eucalypt line and that there is no range gap between Albany and Cocklebidy. It also appears that the species occurs in the arid interior and the north-west of Western Australia. The question as to whether *T. n. novaehollandiae* and *T. n. kimberli* occasionally hybridise to the south of the Kimberleys is thus raised though the Great Sandy Desert may be a distribution barrier.

—JULIAN FORD, Lynwood.

OBITUARY

C. G. HAMILTON, M.B.E.

Charles Greenlaw Hamilton, the first president of the Western Australian Naturalists' Club at its founding in 1924, and honorary life member of the Club, died at Perth on August 29, 1967. He was born at Guntawang, New South Wales, on January 16, 1874, and came to Western Australia in 1897 on joining the Education Department.



C. G. Hamilton

Mr. Hamilton's father, Alexander Greenlaw Hamilton (1852-1941), was a noted N.S.W. naturalist (*Australian Encyclopaedia*, 4, 1958: 419), lecturer in botany and nature study at the Sydney Teachers' Training College. He visited Perth in 1925 for the meetings of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science and gave a lecture to a meeting of the Club. A brother, Harold Wynne Hamilton (1877-1933), lecturer in geography at the training college, was one of the founders of the Gould League of N.S.W. and its honorary secretary for 17 years. Mr. Hamilton's

eldest son, Mr. A. L. Hamilton, of the Department of Agriculture, Busselton, married a grand-daughter of the well-known ornithologist, F. Lawson Whitlock. His second son, Mr. C. D. Hamilton, one of the first junior members of this Club, and now senior lecturer at the Department of Forestry, Australian National University, Canberra, discovered, whilst with the Forestry Department at Mundaring, a remarkable parasitic plant, the only member in Australia of the Rafflesiaceae, and which was named after him *Pilostyles hamiltoni* by Mr C. A. Gardner. The third son, Mr F. L. Hamilton, is with the Education Department.

Charles Greenlaw Hamilton, as might be expected with his family associations, had a life-long interest in natural history, developed in rambles in the country with his father at Guntawang and in the Illawarra area. He inherited from his father, also, a facility with pen and brush, which he developed as an aid in natural history observation. In later life his artistic talents came more prominently to the fore and to the general public he was primarily known as an artist and art critic.

He joined the Education Department in this State as an Assistant on January 18, 1897 and during his period of service held various posts including First Assistant, Temporary Head Supervisor, Officer-in-Charge of Nature Study and Head Teacher. He retired from the department on January 16, 1939, after having held the position of Head Teacher at the Claremont Practising School for three years. Perhaps he gained most from his period as head of the Practising School, for this time he was able to try out many of his ideas of a new educational system while working in close collaboration with his colleagues of the Teachers' Training College nearby. Until his death he advocated a more enlightened and free method of teaching. Among his friends in this field he numbered Professor R. G. Cameron, Professor of Education, for whom he had a great admiration.

However, it was his nature study activities in the department by which he was generally known in the community. The post gave him ample opportunity of studying natural history and developing a wide knowledge of the plants and animals in the South-West and the Goldfields areas. He thrilled generations of pupils with his lightning blackboard sketches of birds and other creatures. Sketching outdoors was a favourite pastime and at every opportunity he made beautifully sensitive drawings of the many plants and animals with which he came in contact. These delightful thumbnail sketches covered page after page in the sketchbooks he always carried, and, in fact, embellished any piece of paper or envelope he had at the time.

He was one of the nineteen local naturalists who were the foundation members of the Western Australian Naturalists' Club in 1924 and it seemed the logical step at the time to choose him as President. He served two terms in this founding period, and took up the reins again as President in 1930-31, and yet again in 1933-34, and in 1939-40. In later years at important Club functions he was invited to speak and was a regular visitor, during his years of retirement, at the annual Wild Life Shows in the Town Hall. At the annual general meeting of the Club on December 7, 1962, in the presence of many pioneering members specially invited for the occasion, he declared Naturalists' Hall officially open. To mark the event he presented the Club with two watercolour paintings of his (the Western Rosella and the Blue-and-White Wren) which now hang in the Library, and a recent photograph of himself, which is here reproduced (a portrait, c. 1920, was published in the history of the Club, *W. Aust. Nat.*, 9, 1964: 125).

Unlike his father he was not a publishing naturalist and his influence on natural history and his fellows was mainly through

personal contact—the generous sharing of his vast store of knowledge, stimulus and continued encouragement.

After he reached the retirement age in the Education Department he joined, in 1940, the staff of Hale School, then in West Perth, as Art Master and remained there until 1954. He revelled in his work at this school and was keenly interested in its sporting activities, playing with, and coaching various teams. He was particularly fond of cricket and was a tricky bowler right up to the time he left. At the age of 72 he achieved the hat trick bowling against the School XI.

Outside the world of schools and natural history in these later years he became best-known, perhaps, as art critic of *The West Australian*, for which newspaper he wrote between 1946 and 1964. In these writings he discussed many aspects of art and his approach was uncommon in some ways. The simplicity of his language was refreshingly understandable and his comments encouraging and constructive. He liked a "trier" and he would help the artist, not only by advice, but by personally acquiring a painting. Love of beautiful things was particularly strong in his make-up and the Arts generally loomed large in his thoughts and activities in his later life. Various art groups he belonged to or visited benefited from his presence. He was associated with the Patch Theatre and lectured and talked to many groups and societies.

For his service to education and the arts he was awarded the M.B.E. and received the honour from the hands of the Queen on the occasion of the Royal Visit in March 1963.

V. N. Serventy contributes the following appreciation, which sums up what a great many people thought of him:

"I first met Charlie Hamilton—we always called him that right from the first meeting—at a Naturalists' Club conversazione where he gave a talk and did some bird sketching. What came through on that first meeting was the warmth of the man, the charm of his personality, his innate goodness. We all know many gifted people, many charming people, many well-educated people, but the quality of goodness is rare. Another interesting facet was that long after Charlie retired from teaching he would still be the centre of an attentive audience at any gathering where retired Superintendents or Director-Generals of Education would be ignored. For though he never rose to great heights in the Education Department, as an educationalist he was outstanding and his comments worth considering. Above all his strength lay in the influence he had both on pupil, teachers, college students and practising teachers.

"For all who knew him were privileged to have known at first hand a gifted educationalist and a good man."

Until the end he led a full life. Dr. K. G. Tregonning, Headmaster at Hale School, whom Mr Hamilton taught at the school in 1940-41, and whom he recalls as "a kindly man, everyone's friend and adviser," states that at the Old Boys dinner in 1967 he stayed until nearly midnight, "talking of the future, twinkling eyes and kindly words." On the day before he passed away he played his last game of billiards, a game he loved for the companionship it offered.

The end was sudden. He was taken to the Royal Perth Hospital after a heart attack early in the morning and did not survive the day. His wife (nee Nina Helen Leslie) predeceased him by a year, after a long illness during which she was bedridden. The older Club members recall her as a gracious lady at the early field excursions.

C.D.H. and D.L.S.